

Chapter 5

Dancing History: The 2004 Matachines

The Bernalillo Matachines dance is today probably the most spectacular Hispano version in New Mexico, in terms of duration, elaborateness, size, calendrical importance, and regional fame.

-Sylvia Rodriguez, The Matachines Dance

This chapter is a look at the 2004 Bernalillo Matachines performance. First, a description of the promesa ties the personal promesas (promises) made by participants to the promise of Diego de Vargas made in 1693. This chapter is a look at how the Bernalillo version of the Matachines dance is distinct within the larger whole of Southwestern Matachines. Each day of the fiesta is explored, beginning with the practice and eight day novena leading up to the actual fiesta on August 9.

Promesa

The most important aspect of the Matachines dance is the promesa. Local lore ties the promesa of contemporary times to the promise of Diego DeVargas in 1693, who promised to God that all people returning to New Mexico were to celebrate August 10. The promesa is a personal promise between God and the individual, whose messages are conveyed through the intercession of San Lorenzo.

Every dancer that begins dancing in the Matachines makes a promise to God and San Lorenzo to dance a certain number of years for graces asked or received. Many dancers have danced for the health and safety of loved ones, or for the safe return of family members from war. Many dancers who have been involved in the Matachines for many years have since completed their promised years of dancing. Some of these dancers then create new promesas and

fulfill them for the years that have been promised. Some dancers continue dancing in the Matachines dance because it has become a part of their lives. One dancer states:

I myself as of now don't have a promesa, I just dance from year to year thanking San Lorenzo for health and relaying messages for me and also that I can be here another year. I look forward to the time to go out and dance. It's like getting up in the morning waiting for August to come around.ⁱ

Once dancers believe that they have fulfilled their promesas, they usually retire from the Matachines. The 2004 Matachines retired three dancers including longtime danzantes Lynn Jaramillo, Kathy Roybal and Joseph Sanchez.

Some retirees of the Matachines dance remain a part of the Matachines for many years after retirement. Some elect to aid the Mayordomos in the setting up of chairs or bleachers in the dance area. Others help in setting up the tents, making food, etc. Some take on the role of *oficial*.

The promesa is not only limited to dancers or retirees of the dance. The Mayordomos make a significant promise to plan the fiesta, which includes feeding the community *en masse*. The promesa made by the Mayordomos carries on throughout the entire year and does not just include devoting their time and efforts during the fiestas. Regarding an important facet of their promesa, the 2004 Mayordomos state:

Although we both may have different reasons in our hearts for fulfilling this commitment, it is our strong belief in the tradition of this fiesta that is the biggest part of our Promesa to San Lorenzo. We promise to do our part in continuing this long standing tradition, which has been alive and strong for over 300 years, by helping to educate youth in our community so that the Tradition of the Fiestas de San Lorenzo in Bernalillo will live on for many more generations to come.ⁱⁱ

Many individuals also make promesas to San Lorenzo by cooking food for the dancers, decorating the jacal, providing water to the dancers, carrying San Lorenzo in procession, painting the lines in the dance area, cleaning the Santuario de San Lorenzo, or simply watching the dances

with their families on Camino del Pueblo. According to Aguilar, the act of making a promise and lending oneself often coincides with self sacrifice and full-fledged commitment:

There's been some promesas made because San Lorenzo interceded and helped people with changing their life, whether it was because of addiction, or because of some other problem that they had in their life and so people will make a commitment to lend themselves for the fiesta and those people that make promesas and lend themselves were called "esclavos de San Lorenzo" (slaves of Saint Lawrence) and the idea was that they committed themselves to dance for the feast and it's a long commitment. Practice starts the first Sunday of July, and then there's practice every Sunday and then starting the first of August, there's the novena and so if you made a promesa you have to attend all of these things, and then right before the fiesta you lend yourself to the Mayordomos to help clean the yard, or set up the jacal, or you know whatever needs to be done in preparation for the fiesta, and so that's why they called them 'esclavos de San Lorenzo.'ⁱⁱⁱ

When some children are born, promises are made by their parents that their children dance the Tambor or Malinche roles when they are old enough to fill those position. Sharon Torres-Garcia, whose daughter was a 2004 Malinche, states that she has been waiting for her daughter to dance the role of Malinche for about seven years. She made the promesa that her daughter dance the Malinche role when she became aware that the saint would be at the home of a relative.^{iv}

Mike Kloepfel, a current Monarca, states that the promesa is not exclusive to the three days of the fiesta. He states:

It's a lifelong commitment, it's not something that you say 'well I'm going to do this in two years and then get out and that's everything.' You have goals, but when you make the commitment you're putting everything you have in it and so being here August 9, 10, and 11 is just part of the whole aspect of what I do and why I do it.^v

Kloepfel's explanation of the promesa being a lifelong commitment is very evident in Lala Acosta's sentiments toward la promesa. Acosta began dancing the Matachines in 1966-67. After dancing in la corrida and la danza for 29 years, Lala began teaching the Malinches the dance steps in order to prepare them for the fiesta. She also began playing the guitar accompaniment,

but was unable to participate in la fiesta in 2006 due to serious health complications. In regards to the promesa, she states:

We ask God through San Lorenzo because he's busy with everything in the world; he's too busy to answer some of my requests. That's why he has his santos...all my requests that I've made to God through San Lorenzo have been met. San Lorenzo and God will always be there, all I have to do is ask.^{vi}

Regarding her inability to participate in the 2006 Matachines dance, Acosta expresses the difficulty of not being able to take part in la fiesta:

I danced until I couldn't dance anymore...I've always been a part of him...I felt like I had let him down [with my absence] but he knows I cannot be there. When I die, I want to take him with me...I'm not going to say goodbye to him, I'm gonna be physically with my San Lorenzo.^{vii}

Practice

The initial commitment to dance in the Matachines begins immediately after the fiesta. When the saint arrived at the Dominguez/Montoya home on August 11, 2003, a list was passed around in which all interested in dancing the following year were to sign their names. Participants from Monarca to Malinches are to sign up at this time. Dancers are then called by veteran dancers to remind them of the first July practice.

The Malinches are the first to meet with practice twice a week beginning in June, for about two hours a day.^{viii} Before the teaching begins, Lala Acosta conducts a meeting with the Malinches and their parents and asks each of them why they are dancing, stressing that "these girls belong to San Lorenzo."^{ix} She teaches the Malinches what to eat, what to drink and even how to chew gum during the dances, in addition to taking them through the route of la corrida.^x The Malinches and their parents attend these practices that are taught by Lala Acosta, who is accompanied by her nephew, Lorenzo Acosta and Pamela Vigil who aid her in this task.^{xi} Most Malinches who participate in the Matachines dance only participate on one occasion, therefore

many of the new Malinches must learn the dance steps. Desiree Lovato, a 2004 Malinche, expresses the difficulty of learning the dance steps, commenting that she oftentimes practiced at home.^{xii} Acosta states that this is an important aspect of the preparation phases of la fiesta stating that it is crucial that “the first Sunday in July [when all dancers practice, the Malinches] are ready” in this way the Malinches “know what they’re doing and they remember what was taught to them.”^{xiii}

The first official practice for all dancers begins the first Sunday in July. Robb A. Sisneros, a current rezador, calls the Mayordomos as a reminder that practice begins soon, asking the family if they have made preparations for the practices.^{xiv} The subsequent observations are based on 2004 field data and reflect the model in which the practices and fiestas follow from year-to-year with slight modifications. On July 4 many dancers begin to gather at the Dominguez/Montoya home at about 5:00 p.m. The front yard as well as the interior of the home are filled with people all ranging in age. In the room in which the altar is positioned, a handful of individuals sit in silence and pray. Shortly afterwards, a group of 30-35 dancers are told to create one fila. The dancers are dressed in t-shirts and jeans which demonstrate an explicit rule that all dancers must have their shirts tucked in, for the purposes of showing respect for the saint. Dancers do not wear cupiles on this occasion, but carry guajes and palmas, which must rest on the shoulder. Two Monarcas and two Malinches stand at the head of the fila which are lined up, facing the home of the Mayordomos. The Abuelos and Toros walk about socializing with those present.

After a brief pause, the saint is brought out of the house, borne by the Mayordomos. The dancers face the group of people, including the Arcos, *rezadores*, rifles, Mayordomos, and people of the community. The two Monarcas shake their guajes, signaling the start of the dance.

This is also the signal given to the Músicos that the dancers are ready to begin the dance.^{xv} The *rezador* begins praying with the sign of the cross, the guns are shot, and the music begins. The dancers then perform a kick/bow sequence: kick right leg then bow, kick left leg and pause, kick left leg then bow, kick right then left leg. The dancers then turn away from the saint following the capitanes. As each dancer passes and turns away from the saint, the guaje is lifted in honor of San Lorenzo. The fila then proceeds away from the saint with dancers executing a skip step, following a police escort and the Tambores. When the fila is approximately 50 yards from the saint, it turns and dances back. When the dancers arrive to the saint, the same kick/bow sequence is performed. The dancers dance to and from the saint three times before taking a rest and walking. On the third kick/bow sequence, the Malinche that had been dancing now switches with another. When the fila begins to walk, the music also stops and the *rezador*, along with the individuals walking with the saint, can be heard praying the rosary. The Monarcas, as well as the Toros and Abuelos, give directions to the dancers about dance logistics, including when to begin dancing, and how to perform the kick/bow sequence. The procession begins on Calle Oñate and continues south on Calle Don Tomas, east on W. Calle Don Fransisco, then immediately south to the Montoya home on San Lorenzo Street.

At the arrival to the Montoya home, the two filas split and create an entry for the saint. The music stops as does the beating of the guajes.^{xvi} The *santo viejo*, adorned in red attire, is brought out from the house. The *santo viejo* joins the *stampa* of San Lorenzo. The group of people turns around, as do the dancers, who reform the filas. The *rezador* begins praying again, the guns are shot, the music begins, the dancers perform the kick/bow sequence and begin to dance back to the home of the Mayordomos. At the end of San Lorenzo Street, the third and last depiction of San Lorenzo joins the *santo viejo* and the *stampa*. The carved *santo bulto* of San

Lorenzo is borne by the Mayordomos of the Santuario de San Lorenzo and/or by their family members, which takes its place behind the third arco.

When the Matachines near the home of the Mayordomos, several individuals await the arrival of all three saints, holding burning incense at the end of Calle Oñate. Upon the arrival of the saints to the home, all three are placed inside the home on a three-tiered altar which was made by Bobby Chavez.^{xvii} The altar was donated in 2002, which replaced the previous altar made by Manuel Chavez.^{xviii} The Mayordomos have water and watermelon for the dancers. All dancers are called to the backyard for a meeting several minutes later, which includes one Monarca explaining practice and dance logistics, including when and what time the dancers are to report during the coming weeks. Monarca concludes his meeting and all dancers leave the home and dance area. Before leaving, many dancers go inside the home and pray.

This procession/practice is embedded in history and symbolism. Robb A. Sisneros states that this first practice and procession signify the unification of the two communities in which San Lorenzo is the patron.^{xix} As mentioned in the previous chapter, the santo bulto is also known as San Lorenzo de Silva, which belonged to the community of El Llanito. The stampa belonged to the community of Bernalillo. Charles Aguilar echoes Sisneros' statement saying:

Bernalillo has two different sections, we have what they call El Llanito and then we have Bernalillo- the main part of town. And there was a San Lorenzo in El Llanito and there was a San Lorenzo in the downtown area. On the first Sunday in July, those two are reunited to start the fiesta.^{xx}

Practice resumes on July 11, 2004 beginning at 7:00 p.m. The dancers begin to gather at the Domiguez/Montoya home at about 6:30 p.m. On the street in front of the home, white lines are drawn by the *oficiales*, marking the dance area. Two sets of parallel lines, approximately 15 feet in length, are drawn from east to west. Six smaller lines, about a foot in length, are drawn on

each of the four lines, marking individual dance areas. A small cross is then marked in the middle of the four lines (Illustration 3).

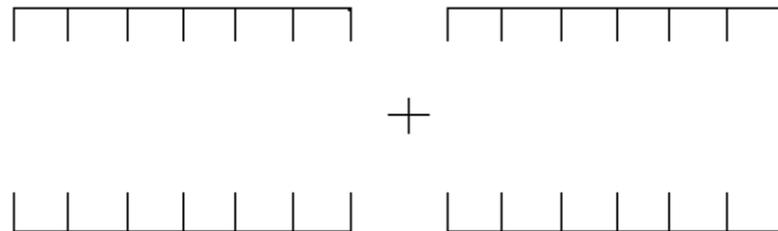


Illustration 3. Fila dance area.

Bleachers and benches are set-up along the peripheries of the dance area. The dancers begin to arrive and enter into the house and pray. After a short time, the dancers are called to the backyard, which becomes the meeting space of the danzantes.

The elder of the two Monarcas begins to read the names of the danzantes of the fila and begins to position the dancers within their proper fila. Due to the absence of some dancers of la danza, some dancers of la corrida are asked to practice and learn the dance steps. Four new dancers participate in the practice, which includes a run-through of the entire dance. After la danza, all dancers of the corrida join the filas lining up behind the last dancer of the fila. The music begins and the kick/bow sequence is performed, followed by the filas walking backward and separating. A double-skip step is performed several times, with Toros and Abuelos instructing new dancers. The dances end, with all dancers exiting the dance area to the backyard. The practice concludes with the Monarca thanking the dancers who danced for the first time, along with reminders about dance time and dates.

Practice is held again on July 18, 2004 and July 25, 2004, repeating the same dance routine that occurred the previous weeks. During these subsequent practices, much occurs on the peripheries of the dance area including small children imitating the dancers, elders socializing, corrida dancers waiting anxiously and watching each step carefully. One dancer states that “for

the people in attendance, [the practice is] like a social meeting ground for the community” in addition to an event which “brings the community together...on [the] Sundays leading up to [the fiestas].”^{xxi} La danza and la corrida are performed and last about an hour. During the dance, the dancers avoid the large puddles that have formed along the dance area due to summer rains. Many roles are shifted in which members of the fila are asked to play Toro, Abuelo and Monarca roles.

La Novena

The nine-day novena begins on August 1, 2004 leading up to August 9. Dancers, as well as families and spectators, begin to fill the Dominguez/Montoya home at 6:45 p.m. The Tambores beat the drum, calling all dancers inside the house. La novena begins when Aguilar, who is accompanied by Katherine Chavez, begin with the sign of the cross. Prayers are said in Spanish, followed by the “gozos de San Lorenzo,” which detail the story of Bernalillo’s patron, followed by a chorus that is sung by the people in attendance after each verse (for novena text and prayers see appendix). Immediately following the 15 minute novena, all dancers are told to report to the backyard.

Los Matachines perform la danza and la corrida. La novena is now said everyday before the dance is performed. On Monday, August 2, 2004, the dancers arrive to rainy weather. Veteran dancers decide that the dances will continue. Tents are also being placed at various places throughout the front yard for the Músicos. Timothy Lucero, a dancer of 12 years, who became a capitan in 2005, states “as we get closer [to the fiesta] the dance is perfected” and that this is the time when the majority of mistakes are corrected.^{xxii} On Thursday, August 6, 2004, the Mayordomos, as well as retired dancers, organize a reunion of retired dancers. This was

instituted in order that participants of the dance, many who danced 30 years ago, are honored for their part in the continuation of the Matachines dance. Some dancers present were influential in the sheer survival of the dance when numbers waned. Sixteen dancers, eight on each line, including one Monarca and several Malinches, line up in the backyard and walk out to the dance area to the tune of the violin and guitar. All in attendance applaud the dancers, who take their positions in the dance area. Three shortened versions of the dances are performed, in which during a brief pause after the first dance, the Monarca (Eddie Torres II) jokingly calls for a water break. After the performance, the dancers exit the dance area to the applause of the crowd. La danza and la corrida are then performed by the dancers of the 2004 Matachines. La novena and la danza are performed again on August 7, but on August 8, the novena is said and the dancers leave. The dancers are given a break from dancing on August 8, which is also called “el dia de descanso/ the day of rest,”^{xxxiii} in order to rest and prepare for August 9- the first day of the Fiestas de San Lorenzo.

August 9, 2004- “El día de las vísperas”

2:00 p.m.	Danzantes assemble at Montoya/Domínguez home
2:30 p.m.	La Novena
3:00 p.m.	La Danza (Matachines Dance)
3:50 p.m.	La Promesa dance (Everyone welcome to participate)
4:00 p.m.	Supper (Hosted by the Mayordomos)
5:45 p.m.	Danzantes assemble at Montoya/Dominguez home
6:15 p.m.	Procession to Santuario de San Lorenzo
7:00 p.m.	Visperas at Santuario de San Lorenzo

Dancers begin to gather at the home of the Mayordomos at about 1:45 p.m. The weather is hot and sunny. Many families have arrived early in order to set up chairs along the dance area. Some have elected to set up canopies and tents along Calle Oñate. A great excitement fills the air. Many dancers begin to arrive and many go straight to the jacal.

The purpose of the jacal is to offer a shelter outside of the home in which the altar of San Lorenzo is placed for the duration of the fiesta. The jacal is usually positioned within the yard of the Mayordomos and faces the street where the dances take place. It is customary that the jacal is built by danzantes and faithful followers using wafer board and 2x4, 2x6 construction, which is oftentimes donated by a local hardware store. Roofing paper is also placed on the roof of the jacal to protect the inside from rain. Recent jacal construction has allowed for the walls, floor and roof to be disassembled, transported and reassembled at the home of the new Mayordomos each year. The walls of the jacal are lined with white cloth and decorated according to the preference of the Mayordomos. The floor is also lined with carpet. Fans are placed at the entrance and near the altar to offer ventilation (for jacal dimensions and diagrams see appendix).

When the saint was at the Dominguez/Montoya home in the 1980s, the garage in front of the home served as the jacal. This year, the garage is used once again as the jacal and is decorated with red and white clusters of roses scattered throughout. The altar is set up at the north end of the jacal, including candles and pictures of individuals who have passed away, those who are in the military and the elderly. On the west wall, a cloth is hung which states “in memory of...” including the names of several deceased individuals. Many elderly men and women sit in jacal praying.

In the backyard, many dancers, all matching with black pants and white shirts sit under tents awaiting that start of la fiesta. Palmas, cupiles and guajes adorn the tables, fences and trees. Long tables have been set up under the tents in the backyard which offer seating and eating spaces for the danzantes. At 2:30 p.m. all dancers report to the jacal where the final novena is said. La novena lasts about 15 minutes and includes the same singing and praying as the previous days. After the novena is said all dancers report to the backyard.

Monarca calls for the dancers of the la danza to prepare for the first dance of the day. Dancers of the fila begin to put on cupiles. Many danzantes, as well as family members help each other by aiding in the preparation phases. Some individuals make promesas to help dancers out during this time. The dancers begin to line up on east side of the backyard. Before taking their places on the filas, all of the danzantes gather and hold hands, forming one large circle, for a prayer led by the Mayordomos. Shortly after, the Matachines walk out to the front yard and wait for the music to begin. A large number of people have gathered to watch the dances which begin 3:00 p.m. An ambulance is also parked nearby during the duration of la fiesta should any dancers/participants need medical attention.

La Danza

In la danza, nine individual dances describing the dance drama are identified. The first part of la danza is marked by the first six dances, which is followed by the short break. The second part is marked by the final three dances.

- First part*
1. La Marcha
 2. La Cruzada/ Trote del Coyote y El Gusano
 3. La Cambiada
 4. Cuadrilla de La Malinche
 5. [La Vuelta]
 6. La Toreada del Toro

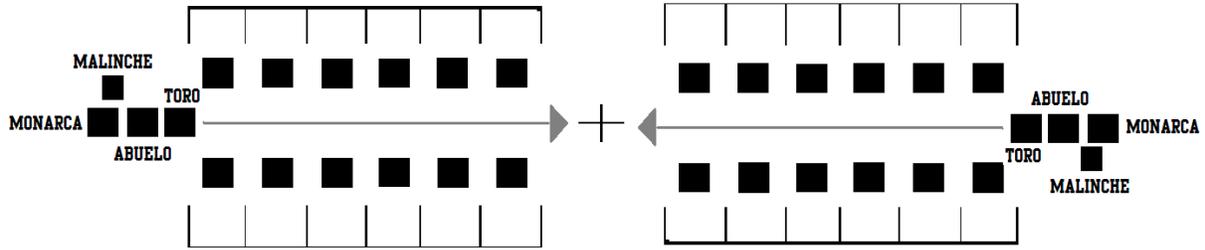
Break

- Second part*
7. La Cruzada
 8. La Tendida/ La Cortesía
 9. La Patadita/ Bailada de las Promesas

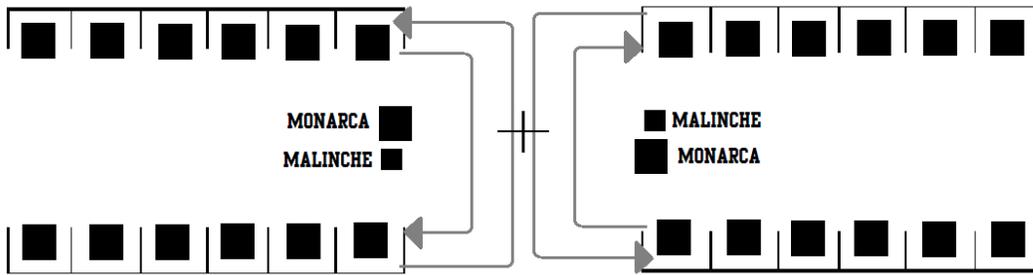
This section identifies the meaning of each dance, including dance steps, movements and music. The musical transcription is courtesy of Claude Stevenson and can be found in his 2001 Ph.D. dissertation.

La Marcha

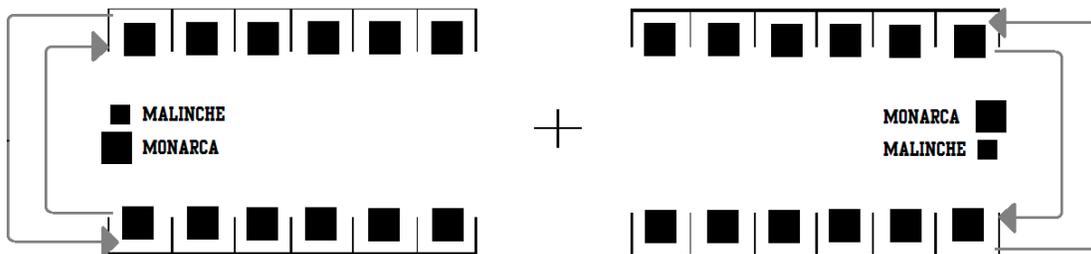




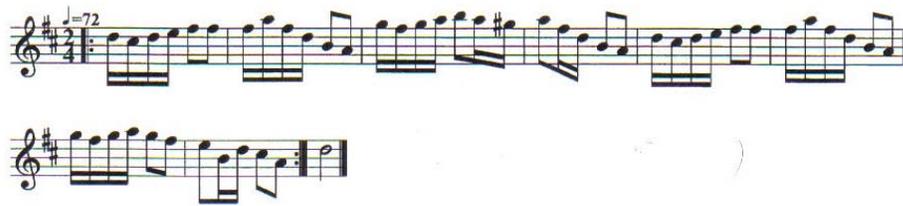
When the Monarca reaches each pair of danzantes, he touches his palma to theirs, in which they separate and face forward (Plate 3). In this case the filas are facing each other. After all palmas have separated, the dancers perform the kick/bow sequence as seen in la corrida.



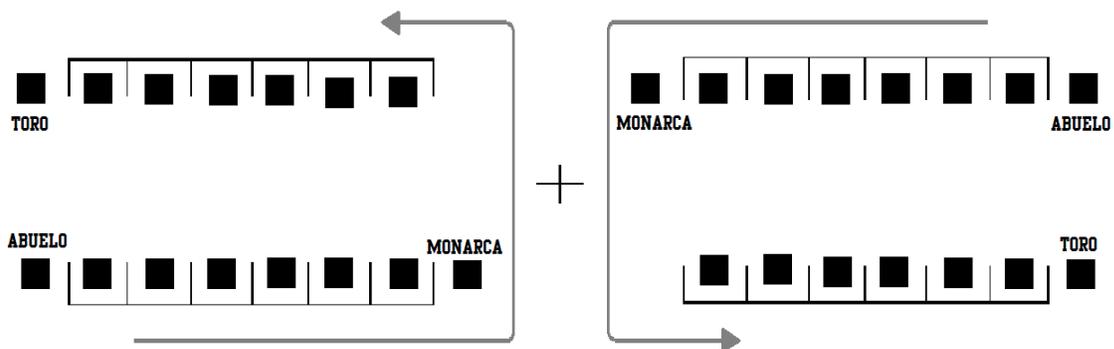
The sequence is performed a total of three times before each line of the filas moves to the opposite side of the dance area and performs the same sequence.



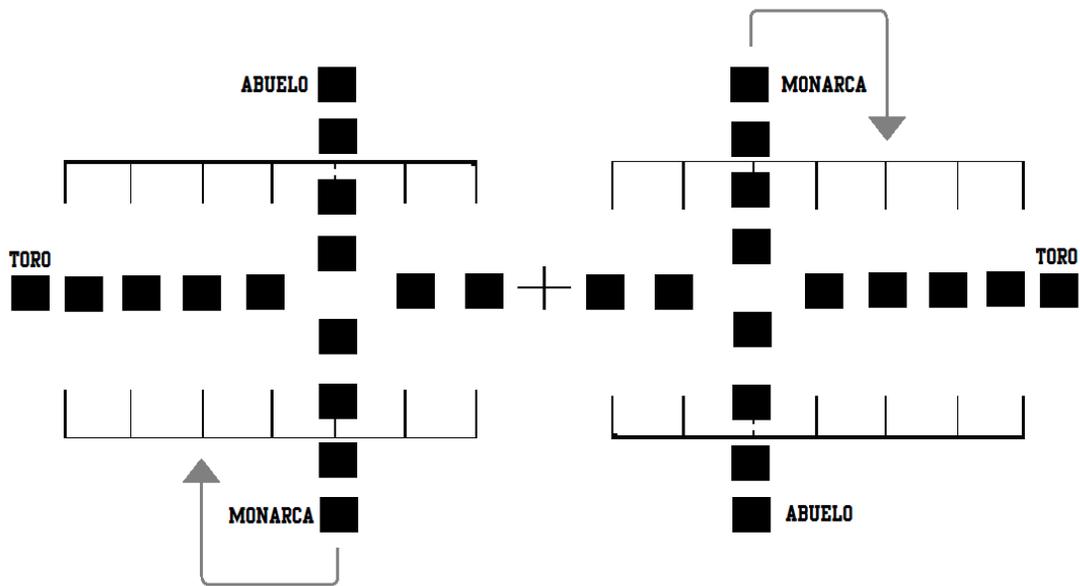
La Cambiada



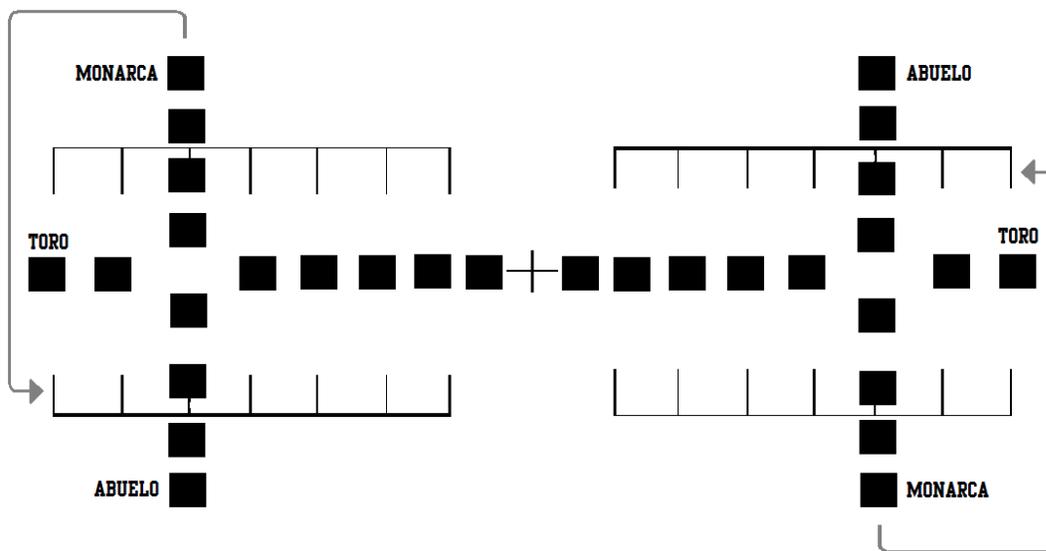
The following dance is called “la cambiada.” Kloepfel offers an interpretation of this dance, stating that it indicates the first sign of trouble, yet demonstrates Monarca leading his people (Kloepfel 1970:8). In this dance the dancers create a cross using all dancers including the Toros and Abuelos (Plates 4 & 5). This has been interpreted as a commitment to the Catholic tradition of starting a religious observance with the sign of the cross. The dance begins with each Monarca leading one fila around the dance area.



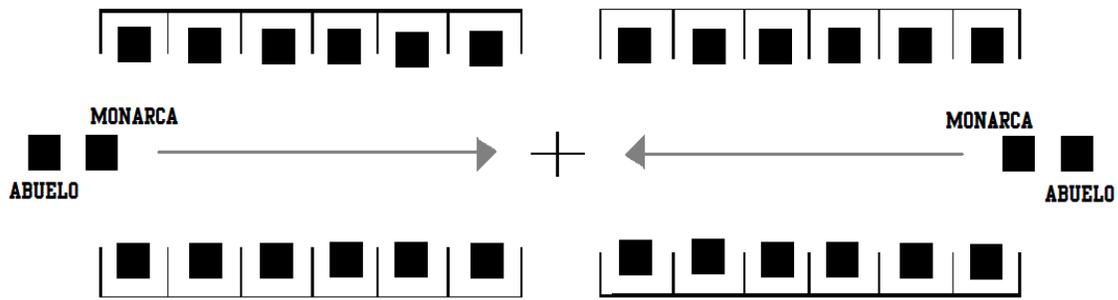
The fila that is led by Monarca now moves perpendicular to the opposite fila creating a cross.



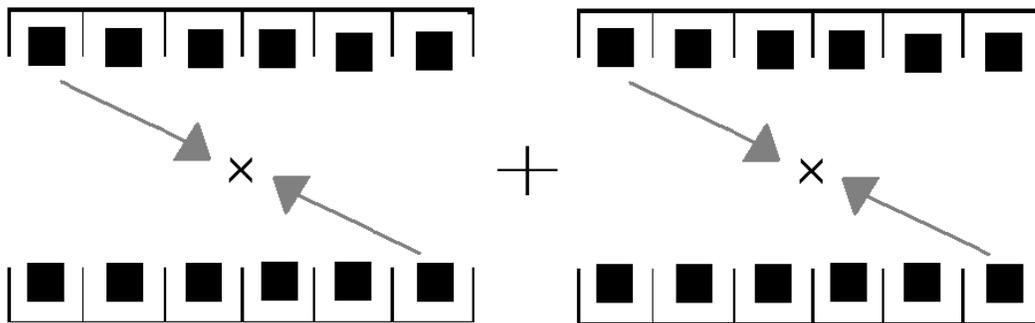
After dancing for a brief moment in the form of a cross, the Monarca again leads the fila to form another cross.



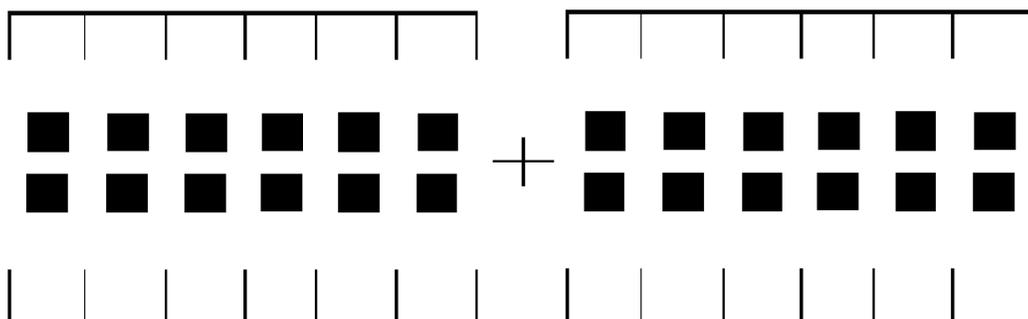
After this movement, Monarca leads the fila back to its original dance area. He now leads the other fila in the same manner thus creating two crosses. As the dance progresses, the Monarcas guide each dancer to a different dance area, only to return them to their original dance space. After dancing with each danzante, both Monarcas and Abuelos dance between the filas.



The two Monarcas then retreat to a designated seating place near the Músicos. Starting with the capitanes, each pair of dancers opposite each other, dance together in the middle of the filas (Plate 6).



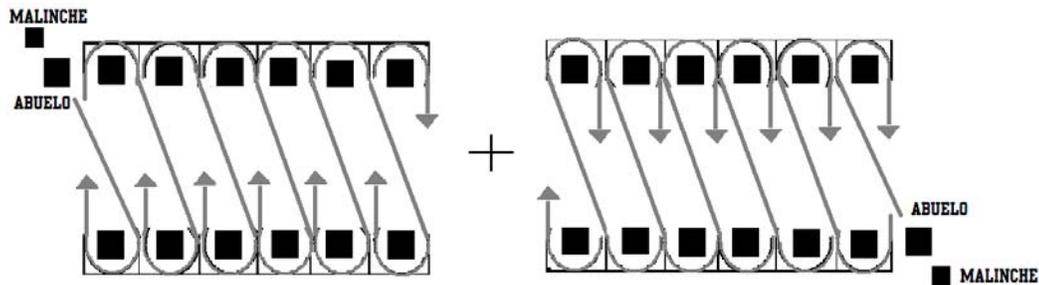
When each pair of dancers has danced, the capitanes call for “todos” or all danzantes to dance together. After this movement, the approximately 20-minute Cambiada dance is complete (Plate 7).



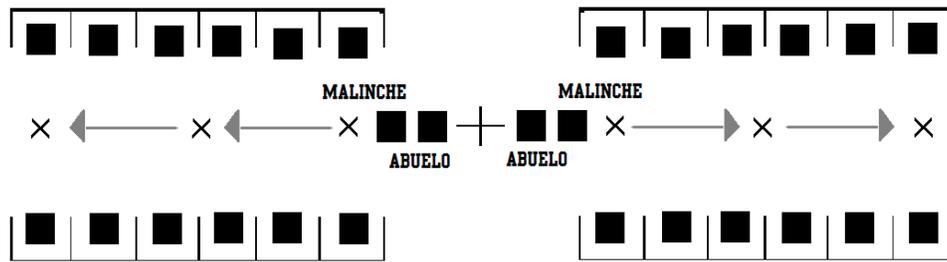
Cuadrilla de la Malinche/ La Vuelta



The fourth dance is the “Cuadrilla de la Malinche or Marcha de la Malinche, or la Vuelta” (Kloeppel 1970:8). For the first time, with Monarca seated, la Malinche appears as a central figure (Plates 8 & 9). This dance shows the conversion of Malinche to Christianity and the influential conversion of her father Montezuma to Christianity. Contrary to the fast paced tunes of the previous dances, this dance is performed to a slower song. The first part of this dance depicts Malinche holding her father’s palma and guaje. Guided by el Abuelo, Malinche weaves through the filas (Plate 10).



Each danzante lifts their right leg waist high, then the lifts the left leg. When Malinche nears each dancer, the danzante lifts the palma over her head (Plate 11). After weaving through all dancers the Abuelo and Malinche perform a stepping sequence down the center of the fila in which at certain intervals Abuelo joins his hat and whip to Malinche’s palma and guaje then move the objects in a circular pattern (Plates 12-15).

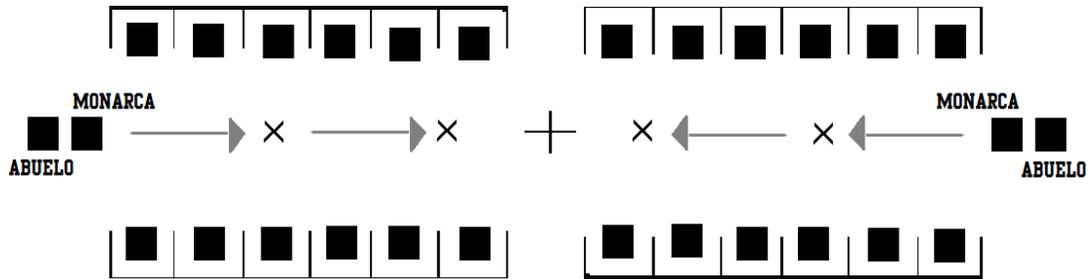


Malinche is then taken to Monarca, who remains seated at the north side of the dance area.



The tune changes, the danzantes execute a rock step, stepping with their right foot forward, stepping back, and then stepping forward again. Malinche approaches her father, who holds his right hand directly in front of him. Under the guidance of el Abuelo, Malinche takes his guaje and pulses the beat of the tune around his outstretched arm three times to the left and three times to the right (Plate 16).^{xxiv} She then gives the guaje to Monarca and follows the same motion using his palma, circling the palma around his left outstretched arm three times to the left and three times to the right (Plate 17).^{xxv} She then gives the palma to Monarca. He accepts both instruments, thus signifying his conversion to Christianity. Monarca now stands and proceeds to his proper fila following el Abuelo.

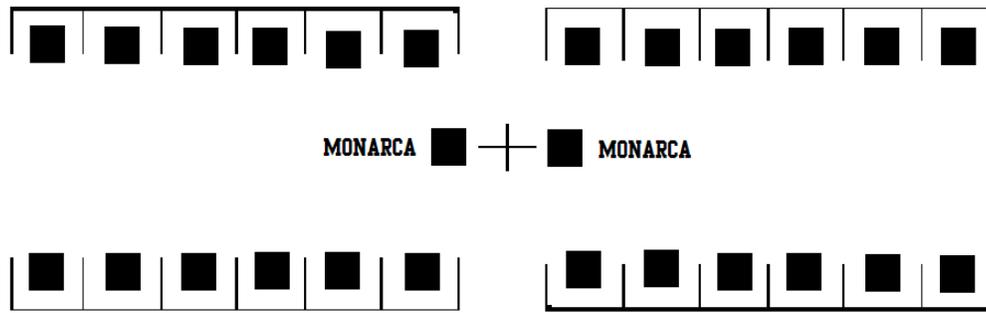
Monarca begins to execute a kneeling sequence in which Abuelo aids him in this process.



When kneeling, the Abuelo places his whip under Monarca’s knee and rubs his calves (Plate 18). On the first kneel, Abuelo calls a change in the dance step shouting “cambean” in which the Matachines now execute the same rock step as before, but with the left foot stepping forward, then backward. On the next kneel, Abuelo calls another change in dance step stating “tierra” in which all dancers squat on the ground. This has been interpreted as Monarca’s struggle with Christianity. Abuelo aids Monarca in accepting this new faith by rubbing his calves. Both Monarcas execute this step while moving towards one another. When they meet in the center of the dance area, one of the Abuelos uses his whip to trace the cross in the center of the dance area.



The Monarcas now shake their guajes in unison, marking the change in dance tune. Now a fast tune is played to lively dance steps including elaborate turning and stamping. The Monarcas perform this step while gradually separating (Plate 19).



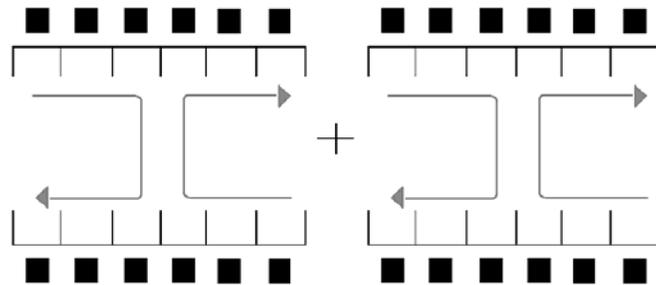
Monarca calls out to each dancer “vamos” signaling to the dancers to his right and left to rise and perform the dance with him. He moves to the end of his fila, calling each pair of dancers to rise. At the end of the fila, he shakes his guaje and the music stops.

Toreada del Toro

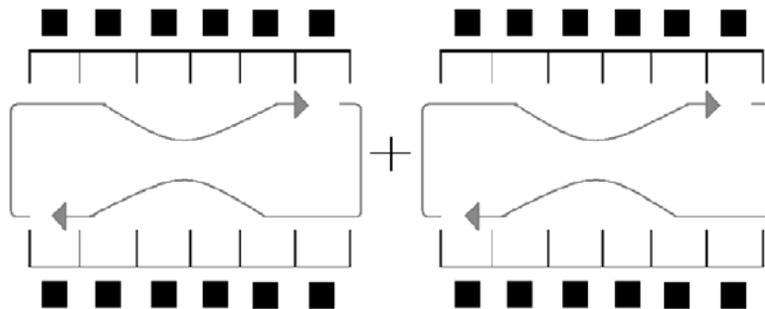


The following dance, called the “Toreada del Toro” begins when Monarca moves to the front of the fila. This dance signifies “the fighting of the bull or the struggle of Christianity over Paganism” (Kloepfel 1970:8). It also serves as a reminder that evil is present and that each person encounters evil at some point during a lifetime.^{xxvi} The dancers now turn in and face each

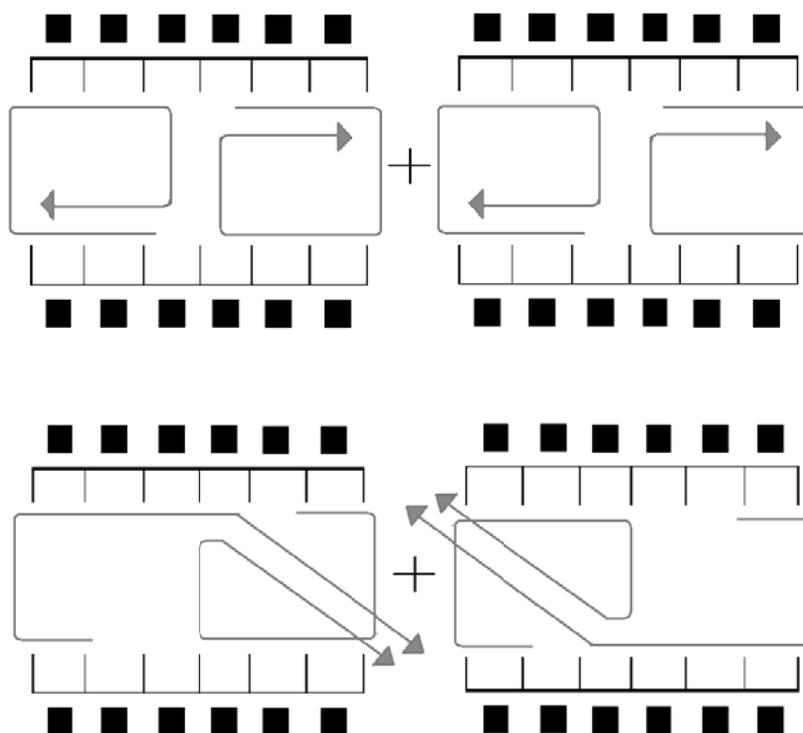
other. Malinche is guided by Abuelo to the same position at the fila. She is holding a red scarf by the corners, reminiscent of a Spanish bullfight (Plate 20). The danzantes now take a step back creating a larger dance area. The Toro takes his position opposite la Malinche. The fast paced tune begins.



The danzantes perform a lively dance sequence: kick right leg to the right side, forward, three small steps, then a kick left then forward. La Malinche and El Toro begin to dance in a figure eight. Monarca, as well as each danzante takes their turn in battling and rejecting evil.



When the Toro and danzante meet in the middle of the dance area, the guaje is raised and shaken at the Toro's head, signifying the rejection of evil (Plate 21).



When all dancers have rejected the Toro, the Abuelos begin to whip the Toros. After a brief skirmish, the Abuelos shoot the Toros with pistols (blank rounds), who symbolically “die” in the middle of the dance area (Plate 22).

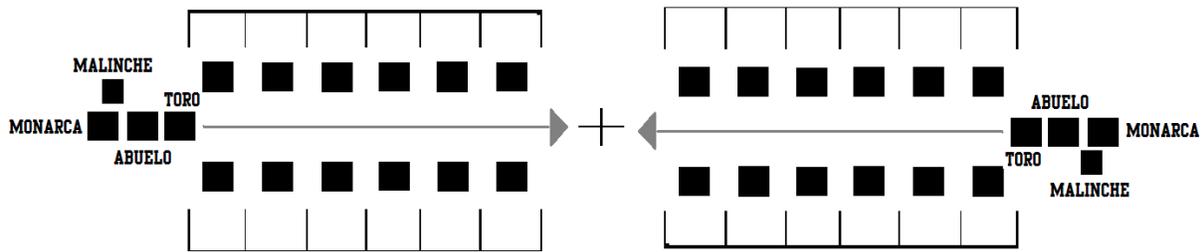
A break is now taken in which four individuals, carrying pitchers of water, offer the danzantes a drink. Water is also given to the Malinches, arcos, and Músicos. Some water may also be given to some elderly individuals in attendance. Some danzantes that had been dancing are now replaced by other dancers. These dancers are called “subs” in which two dancers perform the first or second part of la danza. The break lasts for about 5-10 minutes. After the break, Monarca, Malinche, Abuelo and Toro take their positions at the back of the fila. Because the promesa is associated with self-sacrifice, water is not allowed by any dancers while the

dances are being performed. However during this break, a small amount of water is given to the dancers. During la corrida, water is strictly prohibited until the dances have been completed.

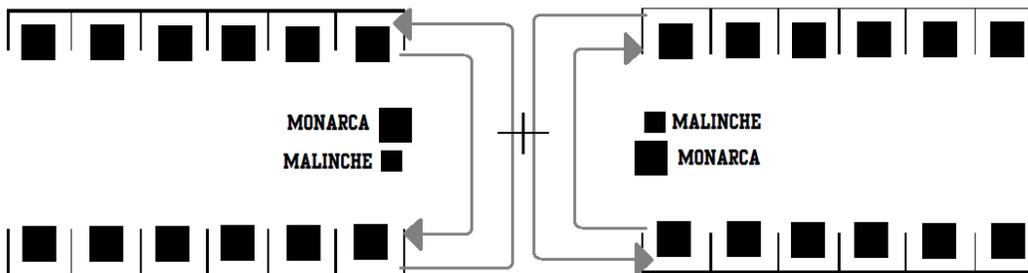
La Cruzada/ Trote del Coyote y El Gusano



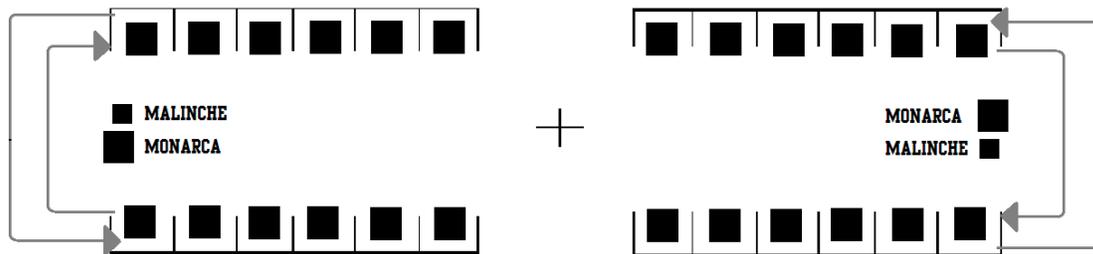
The Monarcas call for an arch to be made in which the arch of the palmas as previously seen at the beginning of the dance is created once more.



“La Cruzada” is performed again, including the same dance steps and tune.



The sequence is again performed a total of three times before each fila moves to the opposite side of the dance area and performs the same sequence.

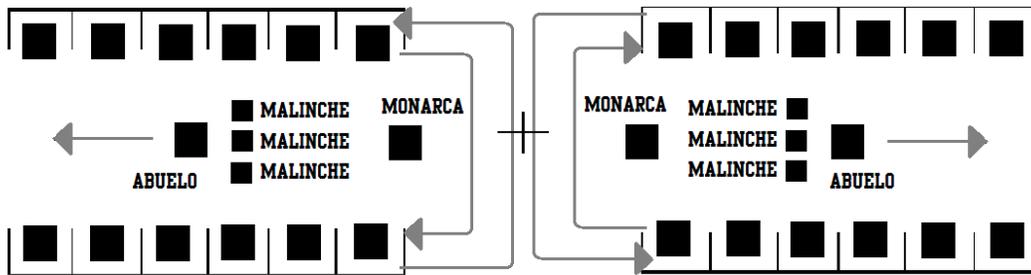


This joyful dance is performed in celebration as the people fully accept Christianity over Paganism.

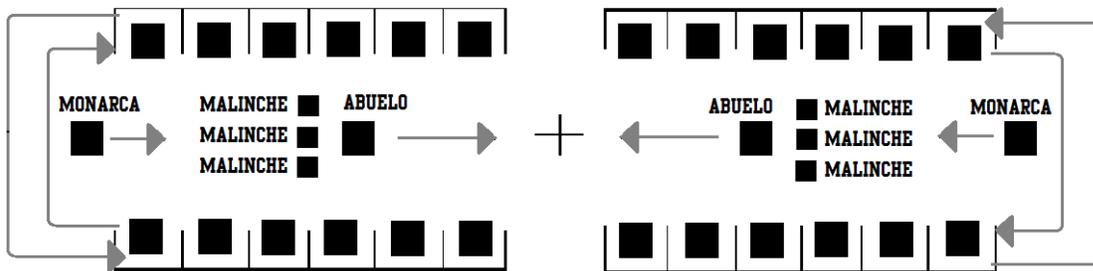
La Tendida/ Cortesia



The next dance is called “La Tendida or Cartesian” (Kloeppe1 1970:8), which is another dance of celebration including elaborate kicking and bowing. The most significant dance step is a sequence performed when the dancers hop to the left, kick the right foot, bow and retract the right foot to the tune of the lively music. This dance sequence is also performed to the right and opposite direction.



Monarca is prominent in this dance, as he calls the changes in dance steps. In the center of each fila stands an Abuelo and three Malinches. He watches over the girls and instructs them on when to dance backward and forward. While the danzantes perform the bowing sequence, the Malinches curtsy from to right and left.

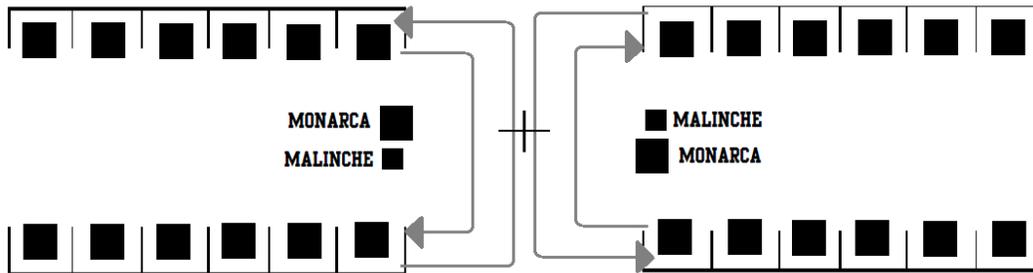


The dance ends with a signal from the Monarcas. All Malinches, save the two dancing with the Monarcas in the next dance, are taken back to the seating area.

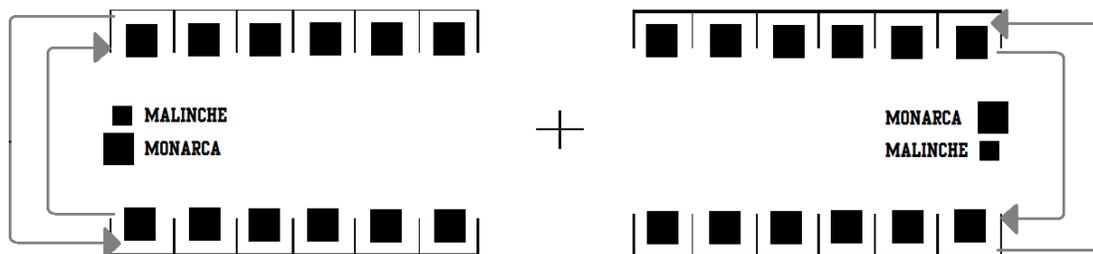
La Patadita/ Bailada de las Promesas



The final dance is called “La Patadita or Bailada de las Promesas” (Kloepfel 1970:8).



The danzantes dance back and forth a total of three times before switching with the opposite fila. After dancing back and forth in the new movement three times, the filas return to their initial dance areas.



After the dance, Charles Aguilar stands and invites all in attendance that have promesas to dance. He first addresses the crowd in Spanish and then in English. Many people from the audience, including the dancers of la corrida, dance with family members, friends etc. Dancers give family members their palmas and guajes to dance with. The Monarcas call “adelante” and “atras” in which the crowd follows command, dancing forward and backward while performing the dance steps (Plates 23 & 24). The Promesa dance concludes with a signal from Monarca. The crowd clears the dance area, the music begins and the dancers proceed with a recessional to the backyard to the “Marcha” tune heard in the beginning of la danza.



The dancers remove their attire while people begin to set up for supper hosted by the Mayordomos.

Supper begins shortly after at 4:00 p.m. Many *danzantes* are present with families and enjoy the traditional New Mexican cuisine. At 5:30 the dancers begin to assemble at the home of the Mayordomos. At 6:00, *Monarca* calls for all dancers, including those of *la corrida*, to prepare for the procession.

La Procesión



All dancers line up and are led by both *Monarcas* to the street in front of the Dominguez/Montoya home. All three saints are brought out from the *jacal* and onto wooden *andas*/platforms. The *rezador* begins the procession by making the sign of the cross, rifles are shot, the music begins, and the *danzantes* begin the kick/bow sequence (Plate 25). Following a police escort, the *Matachines* leave Calle Oñate, turning south onto Calle Don Tomas, then East onto Calle del Norte continuing north onto Camino del Pueblo (Map 2). Many people line the streets with family and friends. The guns are shot as the music begins. *Guajes* pulse the beat of the music while the dancers begin the kick/bow sequence (for procession text and prayers see

appendix). Both filas dance away from the saint. At about 30 yards from the saint, one fila turns and begins its three dances to and from the saint, while the other fila dances away from the santos and eventually stops and walks (Plate 26). The position of the santos, including where each participant is located, follows the same general pattern from year to year and can be seen in Illustration 4 below.

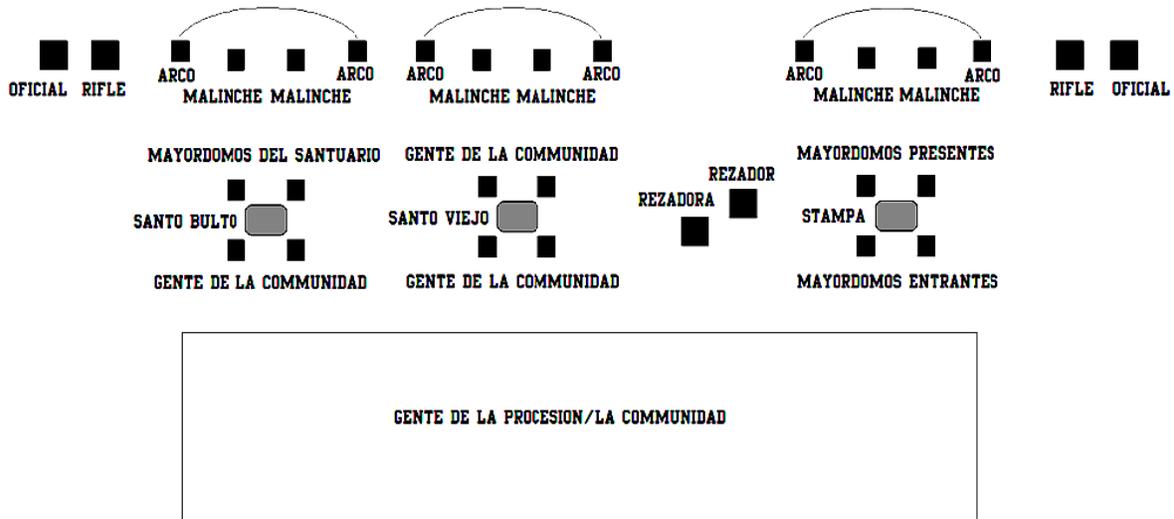


Illustration 4. Procession structure

The dancers arrive at the church to ringing church bells amidst the sounds of beating guajes, gunshots, Músicos and prayers. Both filas join in front of the church, creating one large fila, and dance to and from the saint (Plate 27). The dancers arrive at the Santuario de San Lorenzo (Plates 28 & 29) and line up, beating guajes high above their heads (Plates 30 & 31). The saints pass into church, as do the people following the saint. Gunshots are fired to mark when the saints have entered the church. La corrida concludes, and the dancers begin to remove their cupiles. Many family members give dancers water and drinks. A family has also set up a table with drinks outside of the church. After 10-15 minutes, the Abuelos and Toros call for all dancers to report inside the church where the *visperas* are said. The Parish priest, Father Virgil

Furfaro welcomes all in attendance to the church/vespers. The ambience is solemn, humble and hypnotic with traditional Catholic prayers being said by all in attendance. The dancers, as well as congregation, pray the vespers including traditional Catholic prayers, all said in Spanish (for Visperas text and prayers see appendix). All three saints are set upon the altar, including the actual arcos and drums. The vespers conclude and all in attendance leave the church grounds. The first day of the Fiestas de San Lorenzo is complete.

August 10, 2004- “El día de San Lorenzo”

9:30 a.m.	Danzantes assemble at Our Lady of Sorrows Church
10:00 a.m.	Fiesta mass at Our Lady of Sorrows Church
11:30 a.m.	Procession to Montoya/Dominguez home
12:15 p.m.	Lunch (Hosted by the Mayordomos)
2:00 p.m.	Danzantes assemble at Montoya/Dominguez home
2:30 p.m.	La Danza (Matachines dance)
3:20 p.m.	La Promesa dance (Everyone welcome to participate)
4:00 p.m.	Procession through Town of Bernalillo
5:30 p.m.	Supper (Hosted by the Mayordomos)
6:00 p.m.	Velorio de San Lorenzo (All-night vigil)
-7:00 a.m.	
12:00 a.m.	Las Mañanitas de San Lorenzo

The fiesta mass in honor of San Lorenzo begins at 10:00 a.m. with a choir singing songs in honor of San Lorenzo (see appendix). Dancers place cupiles and palmas on tables that are placed in the foyer of the church (Plate 32). The Matachines dancers of la danza walk into the church in two lines, forming two lines down the middle aisle (Plates 33 & 34). The Monarca calls for a “cruz” and an arch of palmas is formed. An altar server holding a crucifix of Jesus separates the palmas. The parish priest then walks down the center aisle, followed by the arcos. The saints are then brought into the church borne by the Mayordomos and designated individuals who carry the saints in procession. Two danzantes also bring forth a large statue of San Lorenzo that resides in the Our Lady of Sorrows Church throughout the year.

Before the mass concludes, the dancers of the *corrida* are told to prepare for the procession. When ready, the dancers line up and face the church. Inside the church, the *danzantes* of *la danza* perform “La Promesa/La Patadita” while exiting the church.^{xxvii} The mass concludes and the dancers of *la danza* prepare and join the other dancers outside. The saints are brought out of the church by the *Mayordomos*. The parish priest also joins the procession back to the home of the *Mayordomos*. The *rezador* begins to pray, the rifles are shot, and the music begins. The *Matachines* dance in procession back to the Dominguez/Montoya home via the same route taken the previous day. The *Matachines* arrive at the home of the *Mayordomos* and are immediately fed lunch.

The dancers begin to assemble at the home again at 2:00 p.m. Many people show up to watch the dances on the main day of the *fiesta*. *La Danza* begins promptly at 2:30 with the *promesa* dance immediately following. The same routine is followed today with the people in attendance entering the dance area and participating in the *promesa* dance.

After a 15 minute break, all dancers prepare for the procession through town. This recognizes the tradition of taking the saint in procession through one of the oldest areas of Bernalillo, including San Lorenzo Street. As the procession begins, a thunderstorm forms to the west of Bernalillo. When the procession turns onto Main Street/ Camino del Pueblo, drops of rain begin to fall. As a rule, the *Matachines* must not stop dancing due to weather conditions and in this case, because the *corrida* was already in progress, the dancing did not subside (Plate 35). The saints are covered with umbrellas and plastic materials to prevent any damage. As the procession turns onto San Lorenzo Street and back onto Main Street, the rain stops. The procession returns to the home of the *Mayordomos* with supper immediately following.

The velorio, or all night watch or wake, begins at 6:00 p.m. The possibility of the Bernalillo velorio having connections with raiding nomadic tribes, particularly the Comanches, is discussed in the next chapter. Richard Kloeppel describes the velorio stating “Whenever a special favor was to be requested, or perhaps in fulfillment of a promise, the image of a saint was set up in the principal room of the house and neighbors and friends were invited to a night of prayer. This was called a ‘Velorio de Santo’, nightwatch for a saint” (Kloeppel 1970:4). Mike Kloeppel states:

We want to make sure that [San Lorenzo] is safe throughout the night...so every dancer takes a turn watching over Saint Lawrence through the night to make sure that we get him safe until the next day. It’s tradition that we take our turn to make sure that everything is safe and sound as is in any type of society where you have an army or warriors, they all watch over the king the queen, they all take their turn at watch and this is no different and every danzante gets a turn to watch over saint Lawrence.^{xxviii}

Because this is the last evening that San Lorenzo is in the home, Aguilar also

States:

The velorio is like the last time the santo will be in that home, so the family sits with him until the sun rises, just as an honor to be with him as long as they can because the next morning when the sun rises, everybody goes home in preparation for the despedida where the family will say farewell to the santo and it leaves their home and goes on to the next Mayordomo.^{xxix}

According to seniority, all dancers are scheduled to “*velar*” or guard the saint at certain intervals throughout the night and are scheduled in groups of 4, and sometimes 6 with the Abuelos and Toros remaining at the jacal throughout the night. While guarding the saint, two dancers stand holding the rifles, which are the same shotguns used during the processions. The rifles are crossed in front of the altar. The bottom of the gun touches the ground while the dancer holds the top of the barrel. Half an hour later, the two dancers not holding the rifles change positions with the other two that were previously holding the rifles. After an hour, the dancers

switch with the next group that is scheduled to “*velar*.” Alabados such as “Patron San Lorenzo,” “Santisima Trinidad,” “La Promesa” and “Glorioso San Lorenzo” are sung throughout the night (for alabados see appendix). According to Robb A. Sisneros, at least two rosaries are prayed throughout the night- one for the deceased (*devotos de San Lorenzo*) and one for the health of anyone in the community, especially *devotos de San Lorenzo*.^{xxx} “Las Mañanitas” is sung at midnight to bring closure to the feast day of San Lorenzo.^{xxxii} “Las Mañanitas” is sung again at 6:00 a.m., which was tailored to incorporate San Lorenzo in 1973 by Mary Gauna (for *mananita* text see appendix).^{xxxiii} Shortly after, *el alba* is sung at sunrise welcoming the new day (for *alba* text see appendix).^{xxxiiii} After the *velorio*, dancers begin to report to the home of the *Mayordomos* shortly before 8:15.

August 11, 2004- “El día de la entrega”

6:00 a.m.	Las Mañanitas de San Lorenzo and El Alba
8:15 a.m.	Danzantes assemble at Montoya/Domínguez home
8:30 a.m.	La Danza and Promesa (Matachines dance)
8:55 a.m.	Procession to new Mayordomo home (Duran)
9:30 a.m.	Recibimiento del santo
10:30 a.m.	Return to Montoya/Dominguez home
11:15 a.m.	La entrega (return danzantes back to their families)
6:00 p.m.	Baile de los danzantes
-9:00 p.m.	Santa Ana Star Bosque Ballroom (everyone is invited)

The Matachines dancers begin to assemble at the home of the *Mayordomos* shortly before 8:15 a.m. Most of the dancers are wearing white San Lorenzo t-shirts with blue jeans and tennis shoes, along with *respaldos* and elbow scarves. Shortly after, the dancers of the *fila* are told to prepare. The *filas* line up and perform a shortened version of *la danza*. The “*entrada*,” “*la tendida*,” and “*la promesa*” dances, albeit shortened versions, are performed. Dancers, as well as people watching once again perform the *promesa* dance. All people leave the dance area and the

dancers line up, including those of the *corrida*. All *filas* walk to the front door of the house. Charles Aguilar sings a song of *despedida* (farewell) to the tune of a guitar and the beating of *guajes*. Aguilar describes the specifics of the song of *despedida* stating that in the verses, he includes lines reminding the family of a year ago when they received the saint, the promise that was to be paid, as well as specifics of the *Mayordomos'* promise that was made. He sings in Spanish, "today your house will look empty" with the absence of San Lorenzo, and continues by singing songs of praise and thanks to the *Mayordomos* on behalf of the community. After the singing, he touches the saint, then crosses the foreheads of each *Mayordomo*, then finally himself.

After a tearful *despedida*, San Lorenzo is taken outside of the home. The *Matachines* dancers walk out to the street. Prayers begin, gunshots are shot, and the music begins. The saint is now taken in procession to the home of Louie and Mary Duran, the new *Mayordomos*. Depending on the length of the procession, a rosary can be said by the *rezador* if there is enough time to do so (for *entrega* procession text and prayers see appendix). The procession turns east onto Calle Oñate, turning south onto Calle Don Tomas, then left on Calle don Fransisco, followed by a right turn onto San Lorenzo Street. At a certain point on San Lorenzo Street, Mary and Louie Duran walk ahead of the procession to their home. The dancers line both sides of the door of Duran home. Aguilar sings a song and the saints enter home which includes the date, the name of the family that San Lorenzo is now with, the promise that is to be fulfilled, and that the home must now to be open 24 hours a day. This song is known as the song of *recibimiento* (reception). Gunshots are then fired marking the end of the procession. The saints are placed on an altar inside the living room of Duran house. All dancers remove headpieces and line up at the

door of the home, entering the kitchen in groups of 8-10 dancers and perform *el brindé* or *la bendición de la comida* (the blessing of the food).

La bendición de la comida begins with the violins and guitars playing a lively tune. The table is filled with food including fruit, vegetables, sandwiches etc. The dancers are instructed to place their *palmas* over the table. Partners face each other and dance counterclockwise around the table shouting, beating *guajes*, with *palmas* on their shoulders. At a certain point, marked by the *Monarca*, the person that was dancing forward now switches to other side of their partner and dances backwards to the same beat, with *guaje* in hand and *palma* resting on the shoulder. The dancers shout loudly to the beat of the music. When the dance is over, the dancers are now welcomed to eat the food on the table, exit the house, and are followed by another group of *danzantes*.

At 10:30, the dancers return to the home of the Montoya/Dominguez home. Instead of the traditional *corrida* tune, the dancers create four *filas* and walk back to the popular contemporary tunes of the “chicken dance” and “*frijolitos pintos*.” An overall attitude of excitement fills the air. This less formal style of the dance can be attributed to the fact that no saints are present because they were left at the home of the new *Mayordomos*. Every time the *Matachines* dance away and back to the crowd, a different group of people is called forward to dance and perform, including the *Malinches*, *arcos*, *capitanes*, the new *Mayordomos*, etc. The dancers arrive at the Dominguez/Montoya home shortly after 11:00 a.m.

The dancers and the people begin to eat food that has been left from previous meals, as well as the food that individuals bring specifically for this meal. All people in attendance are present in the backyard, sitting and standing under large tents. Charles Aguilar sits upon an elevated area with a microphone. All dancers stand in front of Aguilar in a large group, when the

lead Monarca speaks to them thanking various individuals who danced, who helped in any way, etc. The Mayordomos then speak to the crowd thanking everyone in attendance for their help and support.

The Entrega^{xxxiv} begins with a lively tune played by the Músicos. The entrega is an activity that marks the end of the Fiestas de San Lorenzo, in which all dancers and individuals involved are returned to their families. Because the danzantes lend themselves to the service of the Mayordomos and to San Lorenzo for, not only the duration of the fiesta, but the days leading up to the fiesta, they are returned to their families through a song, with specific verses sung about them. Aguilar begins to work on the verses of the entrega several days before the fiestas begin. In the verses, Aguilar mentions the promesa of the dancer, and names of family members, with the second and fourth lines rhyming.^{xxxv} All dancers, which are accompanied by their families, are called to an elevated area and the verses of each dancer are sung while a lively tune is played. One dancer in particular wished to be returned to her brother, who is in Iraq, so Aguilar included her brother and the war with Iraq in the entrega. An overall feeling of completeness and excitement fills the morning air. The Mayordomos give each danzante/participant in la fiesta a small gift of thanks including a pin and card with a depiction of San Lorenzo. The entrega lasts about an hour and a half, and after, all dancers leave the Dominguez/Montoya home to rest and prepare for the following year.

Another event that brings closure to the Fiesta de San Lorenzo is “El Baile de los Danzantes” which is sponsored by the Mayordomos in celebration of a successful fiesta. It is simply a dance in which all danzantes are encouraged to attend and “pass ‘la marcha’ in addition to wearing the elbow scarf.^{xxxvi} The 2004 Baile de los Danzantes was held at the Santa Ana Casino.

The promesa, the novena, and the three individual days are what make the Bernalillo Matachines a distinct version in the Rio Grande Valley. A patterned beginning, middle and end can be identified with the three day ritual. The first day of the actual fiesta marks the time in which San Lorenzo is taken for the first time out of the home of the Mayordomos and left in the Santuario overnight. The next day, the actual feast day of San Lorenzo, is filled with the most activity including two processions, la danza, and the all night velorio. The final day of the fiesta marks a time when the saint is taken to a new home. When the saint is left at the new home, the entrega marks the end of this three day ritual. In addition, the three days of procession also hint at historical symbolism.

The first procession on August 9th, from the home of the Mayordomos to the Santuario de San Lorenzo, is symbolic of the 1680 flight from the Rio Grande Valley. The people of Bernalillo fled and found sanctuary in the El Paso area which is portrayed in this first procession. The late-morning procession on August 10th from the church to the home of the Mayordomos is indicative of the return from the El Paso to Bernalillo. Later that day, the procession through the town of Bernalillo is symbolic of the permanence of the Matachines tradition in Bernalillo. The final procession on August 11th again recognizes the importance of this tradition, emphasizing that the saint was now traveling from home to home within the community.

ⁱ Leonard Prairie, interview with author

ⁱⁱ Tina Dominguez and Santiago Montoya. "311th Fiesta de San Lorenzo" pamphlet produced by the Fiesta Council and distributed by the Town of Bernalillo Offices, 2004.

ⁱⁱⁱ Charles Aguilar, interview with author

^{iv} Sharon Torres-Garcia, interview with author; Desiree Lovato, interview with author

^v Mike Kloepfel, interview with author

^{vi} Lala Acosta, personal communication, September 2006

^{vii} Lala Acosta, personal communication, September 2006

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- ^{viii} Sharon Torres-Garcia, interview with author; Desiree Lovato, interview with author
- ^{ix} Lala Acosta, personal communication, September 2006
- ^x Lala Acosta, personal communication, September 2006
- ^{xi} Tina Dominguez, interview with author; Sharon Torres-Garcia, interview with author; Desiree Lovato, interview with author
- ^{xii} Sharon Torres-Garcia, interview with author; Desiree Lovato, interview with author
- ^{xiii} Lala Acosta, personal communication, September 2006
- ^{xiv} Robb A. Sisneros, interview with author
- ^{xv} Timothy Lucero, personal communication, August 2006
- ^{xvi} The Santo Viejo resides at the Montoya Home on San Lorenzo Street, however Gloria Lovato and her sister lend the saint to the Mayordomos of San Lorenzo at this time.
- ^{xvii} Charles Aguilar, personal communication, August 2006
- ^{xviii} Charles Aguilar, personal communication, August 2006
- ^{xix} Robb A. Sisneros, interview with author
- ^{xx} Charles Aguilar, College lecture, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, CO, March 30, 2004
- ^{xxi} Timothy Lucero, personal communication, August 2006
- ^{xxii} Timothy Lucero, personal communication, August 2006
- ^{xxiii} Timothy Lucero, personal communication, August 2006
- ^{xxiv} Ralph Chavez, interview with author
- ^{xxv} Ralph Chavez, interview with author
- ^{xxvi} Charles Aguilar, interview with author
- ^{xxvii} Timothy Lucero, personal communication, September 2006
- ^{xxviii} Mike Kloepfel, interview with author
- ^{xxix} Charles Aguilar, interview with author
- ^{xxx} Robb A. Sisneros, interview with author
- ^{xxxi} Robb A. Sisneros, interview with author
- ^{xxxii} Robb A. Sisneros, interview with author
- ^{xxxiii} Robb A. Sisneros, interview with author
- ^{xxxiv} “Entrega” and “Entriaga” are frequently used in describing this event
- ^{xxxv} Charles Aguilar, interview with author
- ^{xxxvi} Timothy Lucero, personal communication